

Spring 1998 LXI



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Bob Dusek

Virginia Evans

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John Groppe

Heather Hagan

Paula Hilton

Kathy Jarowicz

Judy Kanne

Charles Martin

Heather Moser

Mike Nichols

Ryan Pelsy

Lisa Phillips

Chrissy Scafide

Gayle Smith

Anne Trotta

Randy Wagers

Heidi M. Wenk



## Measure

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Volume LXI

..\*..  
Measure  
1997

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poems by  
Heidi M. Wenk





# Homecoming

*Heidi M. Wenk*

A crisp, alive feeling  
hums inside the walls.  
Invisible flowers  
leave their distinct fragrance,  
and the smell of the drinks  
in their red cups  
surround their shimmering  
satin bodies —  
A regular party  
about to begin.

Everyone is beautiful tonight —  
almost everyone.  
As I stand beside her,  
admiring her,  
and silently criticizing myself,  
I say nothing,  
but let the words and colors  
and curls push me farther down  
into the world  
that I know so well.

Once again,  
I am distant and out of place.  
I can see it in their eyes,  
and in their actions.

They know  
and fear  
that I don't belong  
in a shimmering satin dress  
with a red glass at my lips.

They know what I think of them.

## A Princess with Two Princes

*Heidi M. Wenk*

Tonight I met someone that won't leave my mind.  
He lingers through my castle  
Just making himself at home.  
Doesn't he know that there is a prince  
Who lives with this princess?  
I should have known to lock the castle doors.



# Loneliness

*Heidi M. Wenk*

Loneliness--  
as subtle as my heartbeat  
I ignored all this time.  
Even knowing it was there  
I didn't listen  
as I fell away.  
Now, I've landed  
after a hundred stories  
and many miles  
a slow and softly aching descend  
helpless to do anything.  
And here locked away  
in my corner of the world —  
a world I don't belong in  
while all the others  
out nurturing themselves with others  
have forgotten me.  
I am alone once more.  
Even the sun has left me.  
As the darkness of storms creep in,  
storms stir in my soul also.  
Tonight,  
I dread the hours to come  
spent in solitude.  
Like feeling the greatest urge to sing  
when your mouth is taped shut.  
I long for a smiling face  
and eyes to look at me  
with love.  
This is loneliness.

# Betrayed

*Heidi M. Wenk*

Little girl,  
why do you aspire such things  
unfit for you?  
Don't you know  
you're a girl?  
Don't give me that look,  
or you'll get it!

I wish they would have told me that  
having strength of the body  
fashions gods, and  
empty heads and dirty mouths  
run the world,  
for I would not have made the trip.  
To be female is to suffer  
to be feminine, to be weak  
in a world too harsh for my tiny fragile body  
and tender heart.  
As if hard shelled bodies  
and red eye are all the good  
we can produce.

Give me room to step,  
and as I do,  
you condemn me to your efficient hand  
and your angered words.  
Why not collar me?

Such trash flying from your mouth—  
What am I to say—  
To agree with your ignorant babble?  
I'll buy the gun and the bullets,  
but you must pull the trigger,  
for I am too weak to do it myself.

# The Final Acclaim

*Heidi M. Wenk*

At night  
they come  
with their shameless quest  
determined to conquer  
to ruin, destroy  
yet they are dim in the darkness  
in their white hoods  
just barely visible  
I could have heard them  
the shuffling of their clean feet  
on our land  
I could have sensed their intrusion  
the fear of every black southerner  
the final acclaim  
pounding their hateful symbols  
with their dirty hands  
into our earth  
a blaze of anger  
appears from the darkness  
If only I were awake  
I would have been  
just in time to see  
ghosts  
vanishing, growing smaller  
yet with each act  
they grow  
and step into the spotlight  
with their facade of smiles  
leaders in the public eye  
but leaving us beaten and burned  
in the background...  
screams break the night

pulled from the depths  
of my sleep  
I smell the mark they have left  
there isn't much time  
my heart pounding  
fumbling for the door  
screaming to my husband  
as I near the room  
the illuminated outline  
of the door  
screams fill my head  
terror grabbles at me  
determined  
I try to enter  
but the flames engulf me  
another attempt  
forcing myself to go on  
I see her  
lying there  
her tiny body engrossed in  
the red scorching arms  
of the devil  
I know  
I can't get to her in time  
I can't go on  
still I persist  
my lungs violated  
vision blurred and eyes burning  
but my efforts fail once more  
his arms attack me also  
the sound of my husband yelling  
is distant and meaningless

I can't give in  
the floating object crowd my vision  
I stagger  
still continuing  
it closes in on me...

white walls  
I think  
white...  
his brown face painted with the  
sorrow of a million  
Negroes  
stares at me  
I know  
and  
the tears begin to stream  
down my face.

# Drudgery

*Charles Martin*

Blinding sights to blind the feeble eyes,  
Dreams to fill the weary minds.  
(but thoughts can be deceiving)

I'm sorry for making you waste my time, but  
I had no control. None.  
A slow July night, creepy with subtle clues  
brought me to my nervous knees.  
(but now I can stand again)

I'll never give up  
trying to see eye to eye.  
You keep trying to understand that I will never  
Break my promises.  
Realize that you are too smart to tell me that  
everything I said was true.  
It won't work  
(I forgive you)

I suddenly feel like a different person when  
you ask me that question, the one  
I had no choice but to answer.  
(you deserve the truth)

The dusky dawn brings a new perspective  
on how you pull me around.  
A new day.  
A diversion to teach me that I am helpless.  
(sorry, but true...)

The clear blue sky of twilight holds my hand,  
but it grasps you also.  
Give me the strength to walk away.  
    (I'll walk slowly)

What have you done  
My little one?  
Seeking this lofty goal.



# Watercolor

*Judy Kanne*

The paints  
are  
in  
the cubby holes  
waiting for the brush to swirl  
through  
or grab  
pigment from  
each  
to  
fill the  
brush just right.  
The brush  
dips  
into the pools of paint  
and  
sweeps  
the paper  
in time to let  
this color  
and  
that color

settle upon the  
right  
white paper  
bleeding  
with water  
here  
and fixing tightly there  
where  
no water lies.  
No magic happens  
until  
the painter,  
the paintbrush,  
the paint  
come together  
with paper and water  
to make  
the white paper  
disappear  
into  
a  
picture.



## Please Don't Go

*Lisa Phillips*

"Where were you last night?" she asked, as she watched him get ready to leave in the hall mirror, trying to ignore her swollen cheek.

"I had to work. You bought that new dress."

"You haven't seen the dress. You're too busy working," she said quietly, as the anger filled her.

"I've seen the receipt. That's enough," he scowled. "Why do you buy those things?"

"To keep you from working late," she answered, her voice cracking, nervously fingered her bruises.

"I don't know why you buy that stuff. It's pointless," he told her, his voice gaining in force, "It's not like it's going to help."

"What isn't going to help?" She put her hand on his, stopping him from turning the door knob.

"Why do you always start this? Other men's wives don't behave this way. Why can't you just understand?" He pushed her hand away and turned the knob.

"When will you be back?" She put her hand on his shoulder, standing between him and the door.

"A couple of weeks."

"But...."

"But what?!?"

"Please don't go," she begged, pulling him gently away from the door.

"Quit it," he said firmly, drawing his hand back as if to strike her. She flinched, feeling, once again, every blow he had ever dealt her.

"I quit," she whispered as he walked out the door. \*

poems by  
Heather Moser



## Tuesday

*Heather Moser*

She was feeling infinite that day,  
and nothing was unlikely.  
It was the kind of morning when you wake up and think,  
"I should write a screenplay today. Or run for mayor."  
The sky was plenty crisp,  
dry leaves shattered beneath her feet,  
birds serenaded,  
and the only thing missing was a steaming cup of cider.  
She relished the walk and kept her head down as she strode,  
not because she was defeated,  
but because the road looked exactly like the road at her house;  
it had the same white gravel embedded in the same flat black tar  
and the same grooves from tire tracks in the middle of the road  
because that's where you drive in the country, in the middle of  
the road; you're less likely to hit mailboxes that way, or dogs  
sniffing in the ditches,  
and her thoughts rambled on even worse than this sentence.  
Still she roamed, well past her original destination,  
because she was fairly certain that there was still some  
unexplored terrain out there. And if there wasn't, so what?  
There was always a different road heading north instead of east;  
there was always an infinite amount of Tuesdays.





# Wednesday

*Heather Moser*

Today was the day he had to decide if he was going to leave her.  
This was absolutely the day.

Inaction was action,

since staying from uncertainty was staying nonetheless  
and wasn't all that different from staying out of love.

If only she'd do something horrible, say steal his car  
and sell it, or seduce his roommate.

Then at least he'd be forced into leaving this indecisive,  
ambivalent purgatory.

Then at least he'd be material for a sad sad sad teenage sonnet  
containing the prerequisite references to dark clouds raining  
on his heart and the deep deep deep abyss that is his life.

Or maybe near-tragedy could strike in their lives:

she nearly falls out a window but he saves her,

or he nearly chokes on a Pizza Hut mint but she remembers  
the Heimlich maneuver from Girl Scouts.

Then they'd fall back in love and inspire an ornate,  
impassioned love poem with singing birds and rainbows,  
sunny skies, and the ever-necessary laughing children  
that make their happy happy happy hearts dance  
like prancing fawns or something equally inane;  
sappiness doesn't disturb the delirious.

At least then he'd feel something,

something other than the knowledge that today is the day  
he absolutely has to make a decision about something  
he doesn't care about either way.

All he wanted was an emotion worth writing about.



# Thursday

*Heather Moser*

As I recall, Thursday was the day the neighbor's cat  
jumped out of the tree, straight into the wading pool,  
resulting in general mayhem  
and the sudden uneven dispersal of sunburned kids  
who may or may not have peed in the water from fright.  
Either way, it marked the end of my baby-sitting career,  
what with five wailing Johnson kids reeling around  
a three-yard radius  
and the littlest one still whimpering,  
"Big cat in the sky," an hour later.



## My Sunshine

*Heather Hagan*

The first time I heard the song "You Are My Sunshine" I was five years old and my mom was teaching me how to play it on the piano. After I had learned the song, I used to sing it for my grandparents' neighbor, Sally. She paid me a quarter for each performance.

Over the years Sally became much more than a neighbor. My aunt had married her son, and although we weren't related by blood, I still felt as though I were part of her family. When my aunt and uncle had a daughter, I always looked forward to her birthday parties because I knew that Sally would be there.

"You're so pretty," she would say admiringly. "And so smart. I can't wait to see you when you're all grown up."

A few years later Sally was diagnosed with cancer. On the surface, she didn't change at all, so it was easy not to think about her illness. She had never looked her age and still seemed as vibrant as ever.

No one really spoke of her illness and we all pretended as though everything was normal. That Christmas, when I was 16 years old, everything was the same as always with my aunt and uncle shuttling back and forth between their respective families. Everyone asked about Sally.

"How's your mom doing, Tim?" they would ask my uncle.

"She's doing O.K.," he would reply confidently. "The doctors say that the chemo is going well and she should be done with it soon."

The next year his reply to the same question lacked the confidence of a year ago.

"She says she doesn't feel that bad," my uncle would say, attempting to find something positive to say so as not to dampen the mood.

One day my mom came from work looking more exhausted than usual. We sat down at the dinner table and she informed us that my aunt had called her at work that day with some news.

"Sally has been taken to the hospital," she announced wearily. "They don't think she has much longer."

During Sally's hospitalization, I visited her often. We would talk and listen to music, or sometimes just sit in silence and watch people go by the window. Still we acted as though she were perfectly fine and this was just a minor setback. I didn't know how to talk to someone about her impending death, so I didn't even try.

For Spring Break that year I went to Disney World with my best friend Amy. It had been a hard year for me and a vacation at "the happiest place on Earth" was a welcome getaway. When I called home one night my mom told me of Sally's worsening condition. Without my mom having to say it, I know that Sally would not be there when I got home. I would have to say goodbye, but I wanted to do it in a way that would lift her spirits rather than bring them down.

I went to the store that night and bought a blank tape. On it, I recorded myself singing "You Are My Sunshine." My voice had changed a lot over the years, but I knew that the effect would be the same. I carefully wrapped the tape and mailed it to Sally that night.

At the funeral the next week, after everyone else had gone, my uncle approached me.

"Mom wanted you to have this," he said, reaching into his pocket. He pulled out a quarter and placed it in my hand. \*

## [Untitled]

*Chrissy Scafide*

The subtle darkness of the room made me feel trapped. It was so small yet filled with so much confusion. Glowing shadows created by the black light drifted in and out and some just lingered around me. Everyone was laughing and carrying on but it didn't seem real; it's like my body was participating but my mind was drifting above me quietly observing. I remained helpless on one side of the room, knowing well that all of my answers were trapped on the other side. Terrible obstacles kept pushing me farther and farther back into a corner. I pretended to smile but inside I was filled with rage. He was only two steps away but I was entangled in so much confusion that it seemed like miles. My chest was pounding faster now and there was nothing I could do to stop it. I desperately wanted to float above those obstacles surrounding me and enter into the place that would make me safe. Instead I was trapped behind a wall. A wall of friends and unfortunate circumstances.

# Sweet Memories

*Denise Butkus*

I wanted to tell you I loved you,  
There was so much I wanted to say,  
If only you hadn't left me so soon.  
If there would've been one more day.  
I wish I could see your beautiful smile  
Or that look upon your face.  
Oh, how I would love just to touch your hand  
And hold onto your sweet embrace.  
And now that you're gone, all the time has passed.  
There are things left unsaid and undone  
But forever remains the memories in my heart  
Of our laughter, our love, and our fun.  
My life will go on, but I will not forget  
For I can't bring back the past.  
I'll love you forever with all of my heart.  
Our sweet memories will last.

*—Dedicated to my dear friend Elizabeth*



# A Sense of Justice

*Bradley Gellert*

Freedom.

Exhilaration under the gossamer wings,  
Soar to anxious heights.

Passion for life,  
envy of man,  
delicate, beautiful, **BOLD**

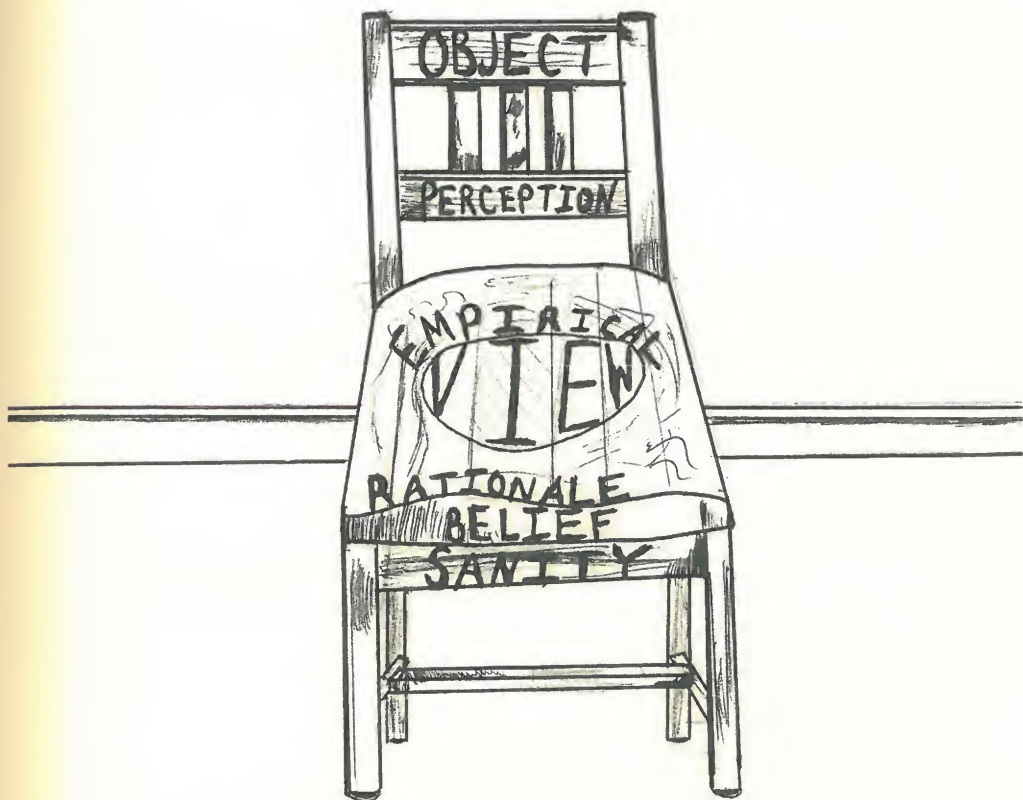
Fragile body torn asunder  
Transparent glass;  
lively image shattered.

It's sticky hot  
on blacktop  
at 105 degrees.

Final, broken flutter  
before screeching rubber smears her  
across the pavement.

Justice has been served.





# Innocence + Life

*Alan Brinker*

A lifetime of ice cream cones, baseball cards,  
and Tart N' Tinies ago lies my innocence.  
Was it so innocent and easy as I see it now?  
Summertimes of baseball,  
Autumn comes, school out for the day and the neighborhood  
boys play football and basketball,  
Atari in winter.  
In spring, school let out, the pool would open,  
And we'd splish splash our thoughts away.  
Pop music was cool, and girls had cooties  
(But they were still cute).  
A few good friends were all we needed  
to jump in leaves and sled down hills and  
Ride bikes and hike through muddy woods.  
Were they really the best friends ever?  
or does memory do that?  
Soon, high school came, and innocence crept away.  
Girls were kissed (and more!) and friends changed.  
Pop music left, replaced by the Beatles and Doors,  
And our minds opened.  
Then came college and more friends (really the best)  
and independence.  
Beer (and more!), the Dead, Matthews, Phish,  
and Kerouac.  
Late night talks of God and maniacal stuff,  
Who knows what?  
There were girls, and so many sunrises seen through bloodshot  
eyes.

When I looked up, looked into myself,  
The innocence was gone, except for the memories.

# She Turns Away

*Alan Brinker*

She walks away, down the hallway—  
The longest hallway.  
A wisp of smoke from a scented candle  
Floating away in the dark,  
Towards the ceiling.

I look away, turn back,  
She glances my way.  
Lightning forks as a key turns,  
Fits the lock of a door.  
She disappears as the thunder crashes,  
And my heart echoes the empty boom.

poems by  
Virginia Evans



## \*Please Announce\*

*Virginia Evans*  
*Class of 1997*

You didn't hear me  
when I spoke kind,  
afraid to raise my voice  
didn't want to raise attention.

Didn't listen when I tried  
to reason  
to see your side  
I thought you were more important.

Didn't notice  
when I went  
out of my way  
so I wouldn't get in  
yours.

Now, you stand  
surprised  
because I found my  
voice  
and  
screamed.

# Missing

*Virginia Evans*  
*Class of 1997*

lost herself sometime  
last year  
somewhere  
around Indiana and Michigan  
holding her heart  
in her hands  
love on her face  
naiveté in her eyes  
she's disappeared

Have you seen her?



# Lady

*Virginia Evans*  
*Class of 1997*

I've watched you  
fixing,  
coordinating,  
colors with candles,  
candles with chairs,  
always busy  
"fixing up the house."

I've listened  
to how unhappy you are  
with him.  
He makes you laugh  
sometimes  
but making you laugh  
isn't  
making you happy.

And I watch  
as you busy yourself  
"fixing up the house,"  
to forget  
breaking down the marriage.

## Destructor

*Virginia Evans*

*Class of 1997*

Did you enjoy  
crashing it through popsicle stick fortresses  
drowning it in your bath water  
throwing it from the top of Lego castles?  
Did you enjoy  
breaking me?

## 54 Pages of Crumpled Paper on the Floor

*Virginia Evans*

*Class of 1997*

Poems swirl in head  
concrete wall  
no dynamite

## On the Inside

*Anne Trotta*

I've got a soul like a worn coffee table,  
So many scars, edges worn by time.  
Kicked and thrown, pounded and slammed  
It has made me, shaped me into this...  
The same but changed — marked.  
My grain has been altered,  
Yet, this is only lying on the surface,  
There are still cracks that go unnoticed —  
Splits in my strength that run straight to my core.  
You can polish the surface...  
Come on, try to make it pretty again.  
Only know that you cannot touch  
The wounds that lie deeper still...  
Not without destroying, tearing apart,  
Starting from the base yet again.  
And, honey... life's too short for that.

# My Piano

*Anne Trotta*

I straddle the bench  
in a haphazard manner.  
One foot out, toes delicately poised  
on the pedal.  
My fingers spread on the end  
of out-stretched arms.  
Mingling with the keys —  
black and white.  
I stare beyond the book before me  
into the heart of this instrument.  
Heavy top raised by slender pole,  
to let my soul escape.  
I can see its inner workings  
of coiled metal and wooden slabs.  
And my eyes return to the paper,  
a virtual chaos of wild scratchings.  
Beauty created through  
the translation of ink into motion.  
In swift, calculated movement,  
my body moves in sync  
with the sound resonating  
from the shiny black box.

# The Combine

*Paula Hilton*

Looking out from the edge of the crowded cornfield,  
the hypnotic trances of dry, swaying stalks ends abruptly.  
It emerges — enormous, green, yellow, bladed; thrashing and snatch-  
ing its prey.

Like Moses parting its field;  
those chosen into a bin,  
the un-saved chewed and cast out.

The man in the cab looks out peaceful, while below  
the earth is torn apart.

Calm returns to the empty field.

# The Ghost of Molly Pringle

*Ryan Pelsy*

Molly Pringle, it was said,  
lay naked in a parson's bed.  
The gossip spread through Christendom.  
Something wicked this way comes.  
"Tis not my fault!" the parson cried,  
"th' slut's a witch," the scoundrel lied,  
"and to her spell I did succumb!"  
Something wicked this way comes.  
Judges, elders, all agreed,  
"a guilty verdict do we need."  
Falsely tried and falsely hung,  
something wicked this way comes.  
The parson, then, alone in bed,  
had fearsome visions in his head.  
Too late to mend, the deed was done,  
something wicked this way comes.  
Now listen children, heed my tale,  
'bout a young girl locked in jail.  
Rising on the scaffold steps,  
a dreadful curse spat from her lips:  
"I'll have your life!" the lass did swear,  
standing on the scaffold stair,  
"I'll have your God-damned life!" swore she,  
"ere the full moon rise, you'll see!"  
A few days passed, they found him dead,  
Just as Molly Pringle said.  
Witnesses whom all respect,  
Had said a scarf was 'round his neck.  
But none could say where it came from,  
something wicked this way comes.



# Gervae

*D Adams*

Scotty was four years old  
    when he found his mother  
    hanging in the garage.  
He thought she was  
    a Halloween decoration  
    swinging back and forth  
    above his father's work bench,  
limp like a sad rag doll  
    in her blue flower print dress.

# Boredom

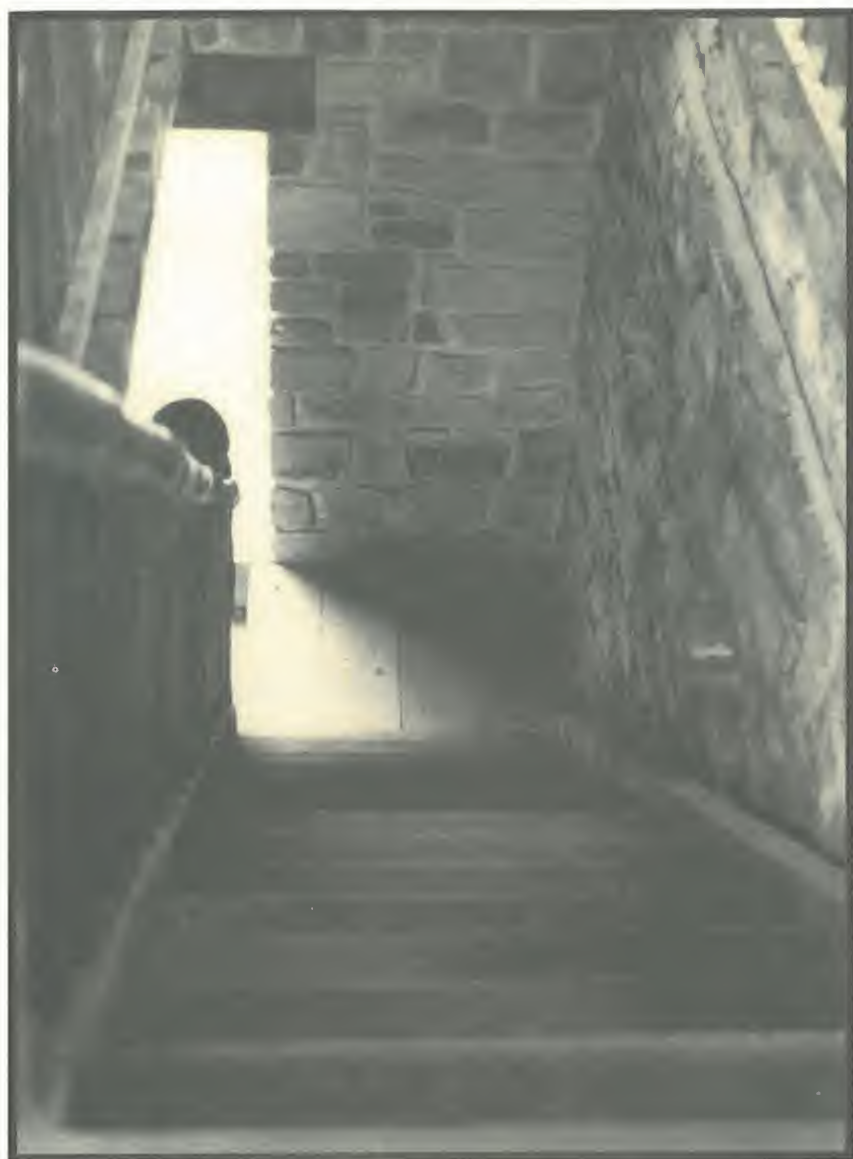
*D Adams*

I talked to a  
Colorado bush bum  
about boredom  
and he said his days were ruled by it.  
It was like a bushfire  
too far gone that controlled his life.  
Boredom ran in his family  
just like his mom's hairdo.  
All she did was vacuum the living room  
in perfect rows  
like when she mowed her lawn.  
She can't be that bored  
if she found something  
so lovely to do with her shag.

# The Death of Father Horstman

*John Groppe*

When Father Horstman died, two years retired,  
no one cried. White vested, we priests gathered  
to save the appearances of order  
and repose, though some did shake with age  
and the gravity of their own deaths.  
Father Horstman's obedience was praised  
as were his jokes, but his death broke the spell  
of necessary, holy submission.  
Not one eulogized joke could restore it.  
Horst had not fallen, though the coroner  
said so. Horst had finally chosen  
an ironic freedom, laughing, without  
submission, at necessity,  
dis-easing us in our autonomy.  
We clung to the pew backs to firm ourselves.  
Uncertain of our places, roles and lines,  
we came deferent to some mute rule.  
Unlike us, Horst's brother and sister  
moved, shuffling, down the aisle with ritual gifts,  
attentive to some vision older than priesthood,  
more powerful than ritual,  
kinder than choirs,  
regretting only that obedience  
had died before their brother.



works by  
Rachel Barlage



# Letting Go

*Rachel Barlage*

Sitting next to you,  
your hand on my knee,  
I sip water, watch you  
gulp your coffee.

The ceiling fan spins above;  
Billie Holliday's soul swells  
around us. We are alone here,  
except for the man behind the counter,  
hunched over a newspaper, hand  
cradled around a thick white mug.

We came here to talk,  
but we sit in an uneasy silence  
that I know I cannot fill.  
What can I say that will  
stop you from loving her,  
that will make you stay?

Last night, lying in your arms,  
I pulled you close, held you so tight  
that you laughed at me. You said  
you loved me, but I knew  
that soon I would be alone  
again, with only the memory  
of your smell in the night.



# White

*Rachel Barlage*

A bright beam of morning sunlight  
illuminates tiny dust particles in the air,  
touches the white sheets  
in a brilliant globe of warmth.

Our feet, exposed at the end of the bed,  
look more naked in this light  
than our bodies did in the darkness.  
His toes glowing sensually in the pure,  
white light contrast sharply with the chipped  
layers of glaring red polish on my nails.

His face is peaceful, childlike in sleep,  
and I lean over to feel the warm breath  
whisper from his slightly parted lips.  
I touch a soft brown curl on his chest,  
and he rolls over in his sleep.

I hold my breath, hoping he will not awaken.  
I long to trace his back with my fingertips,  
kiss his shoulders, feel his heartbeat.  
I want to whisper "I love you"  
so only I can hear.



## Laughing

*Rachel Barlage*

She walked through the living room straightening pillows and piling stray books next to the couch. She opened the curtains, and as she turned, she saw her reflection in the window. Her hair was pulled into a sloppy ponytail, and blonde ringlets framed her face. She was surprised to see that she was smiling. She picked up empty glasses from the coffee table and scratched something sticky from the wood surface with her fingernail. As she stepped around an armchair, she looked down at her leg. She studied its white smoothness, the tiny red bumps on her knees, blonde hairs that shown just below her denim shorts.

Walking toward the kitchen, she watched her legs move up, bend at the knee, move down. She watched her feet as they moved one after another on the beige carpet. The fragile bones that reached from her long toes to her ankle, the tiny blue rivers of blood that forked just below the skin. Walking toward the kitchen, her bare feet moved over a hard, crusty spot on the carpet where she had spilled a glass of Sprite and hadn't bothered to clean it up. Her feet hit the cool linoleum in the kitchen, and she stood still for a

moment, listening to the hum of the refrigerator.

Placing glasses in the stainless steel sink, she heard a musical clink as glass hit metal. She picked up the glasses and put them back down, enjoying the sound. Unable to stop moving, to stand still, she lifted the plastic bottle of Dawn and dripped some into one of the glasses, seeing as if for the first time the thin silver circle on her smallest finger, the delicate white scar just below her index finger. She turned on the water and breathed in deeply, feeling a cool breeze pass through the window above the sink and brush over her hot cheeks.

As her fingers moved over the glass, washing and re-washing, she heard again and again the squeal of the tires, felt the steering wheel fight beneath her clenched fingers, saw the blue car turn in front of her, four crucial feet from her headlights. She knew that if she had not had her brakes fixed last week or if the driver in the other car had turned a few seconds later, she would probably be dead now. Hands shaking, she felt a soapy glass slip from her fingers. Heard it shatter in the sink.

Without looking down, she reached into the sink to pick up the pieces and blinked tears from her eyes as she dug a large shard of glass into her hand. A sharp pain shot up her arm, and she heard herself cry aloud. Cherishing the pain, feeling alive with it, she took several gulps of air and pushed her outspread palm into the glass, grinding it into her skin. She looked down at the sink, saw deep red spots on the metal, a stream of blood running down the drain, and began to laugh. \*

# Longing

*Rachel Barlage*

Breathless, alone, aching  
with fear that my loneliness  
is not temporary, that horoscopes  
promising love and sex  
will never be fulfilled,  
that the wish I make will never reach  
a star, I quiver with longing,  
stare at the bars of the top bunk  
as I lie in bed, painfully awake  
in the darkness.

# Remember

*Randy Wagers*

I sit in my room with paranoia all alone,  
listening to the wind whistle outside the window  
By myself at night, thoughts get deep.

They make me twist in my covers and fight sleep.  
I don't know who I am, or what I see.  
It seems different in the mirror every time,  
is it me?

I wonder if she remembers the way we used to be,  
or if it took her more than a week to get over me.

Sometimes another day feels like another battle,  
But still I climb further up the ladder  
hoping I don't fall to make the glass shatter.  
But I ain't trippin' about these shades of grey  
Because I know that soon I'll wake to better days.

# Approach

*Bob Dusek*

Wild imagination  
of things unknown  
seeking wisdom and the knowledge of  
things past.

Wild concentration  
figuring things out  
seeking wisdom and the knowledge of  
things past.

An extravagant human emerges.

Learning to be  
before you express it  
before you indefinitely act.

Wild discovery  
wisdom and the knowledge of  
things past.

All there...  
concerned most of the time  
worried the rest  
living always.



## \$19.99

*Bob Dusek*

Here goes,  
another day... another dollar.

We need to pick up the pace.  
No toleration for the poor—  
the drinkers, the lovers,  
the living, the down, the out...  
the late,

the confused, somehow  
caught up in another world.

No, it ain't your world.  
But who's to say that YOU,  
that you're as good in their world  
as you are in your own,

running, forgetting—  
caught up in life,  
just like "they" are,

forgetting our purpose,  
society's purpose,  
the reason you have a job,  
the reason that company exists.

"It's for humans...!"

We ain't for it, that's for sure.  
It came of us, for us  
to help us,  
to help them, everyone,

the down, the out, the poor,  
the confused—the lost.

We can't leave them, now—  
now that we've used their blood,  
their history, their ancestors—  
to get where we are.

Rolling down the highway,  
in your comfy car—  
you see a thumb sticking up  
alongside the road,  
begging—just by being there  
for a ride....

Do you stop?

# Break The Mold

*Kathy Jarowicz*

Be different  
Be unique  
Be yourself  
Don't follow others  
    follow your heart and soul.  
Be free to make your own decisions  
    don't let others dictate them to you.  
Dare to be different  
    who cares what others say,  
    for everyone is weird, strange or different  
    in some way.  
Don't follow anyone's footsteps,  
    make your own.  
Be what you want  
    not what others want you to be.  
But more important break the mold and  
    Be Yourself!



## Beyond Belief

*Mike Nichols*

Gabe was a friend of mine, but only loosely because he was popular in high school. I wasn't, and we all know how that works. I tried not to take it personally; we were both subject to a massive social system that came into existence long before we were born and will continue long after we're dead. Despite all of that, I still enjoyed watching Gabe play football. He could tear his way down the field faster than I could even believe, flashing his eyes so quickly, finding holes in the defense only he could detect. He could jump high enough to make me believe no human ever could or ever would jump higher. In his uniform and helmet he reminded me of a medieval warrior, of a knight on a sacred quest. At the end of every game he'd leap into the air and grab hold of the goalpost, seeming to believe that he could touch the dark night sky and beaming stars above.

I believed he could too.

After not seeing Gabe in years I ran into him the other day. He was dressed in tatters: holey jeans, a shirt with cigarette and ash burns on it, and a baseball cap that was more threads than hat. It was a far-cry from his shiny, pristine uniform. His flashing eyes seemed to have holes in them bigger even than the ones he'd run through on those long gone games under the blazing stadium lights. I didn't really say much to him. I just listened to all the problems he'd had. I guess the stars hadn't been as close as either of us had thought.

"...and now I can't find another job," he muttered. "Can you believe that?"

"No," I said. "I can't believe it." \*

# End the Game, Papa

*Mike Nichols*

Kids made too much noise.  
Especially in groups.  
That what the boys in the  
swimming pool are doing:  
playing and making noise.  
I used to play like that.  
But I'm an adult now.

Their father's watching.  
He's watching them splash each  
other and jump in the water,  
sending tiny fragments of the pool  
onto the deck. "Look at me,  
Papa!" they yell. And he watches  
them.

I watch them too,  
wishing they wouldn't be so wild,  
wishing they would just shut up.  
One of the boys is squinting to see.  
He must usually wear glasses.  
I'm an adult now.  
I can figure things like that out.

"God!" one boy yelps.  
"Don't say 'God,'" another giggles,  
as if it's a joke.  
God isn't a joke.  
But his creations happen to be.  
I happen to be.  
And what does that say about God?

I'm an adult now.  
I can think like that.  
But I shouldn't jump in the pool.  
I shouldn't splash water around.  
It wouldn't feel right.  
It wouldn't be right.  
I'm an adult now.

"All right, boys," the father says,  
"Out of the pool."  
That's it, Papa. End the game  
Make them feel as lifeless as I do.  
I don't want to look at  
who I used to be anymore.

# Always and Forever

*Mike Nichols*

Come dance with me, Devil.  
I need a partner and even  
though you've always frightened me,  
to say I truly hate darkness  
would be a lie.  
But aren't falsehoods  
what You love the most?  
Lucifer, the brightest angel,  
Your plight was always so romantic.  
The fall from grace  
to prowl the world  
for the ruin of souls.  
How chilling.  
How exhilarating.  
If we dance,  
will I fall with you?  
It could be I already have,  
failing others and myself.  
Left with nothing beside me.  
Except you.  
Always and forever.  
Indifferent to my joys,  
gleeful of my sins.  
I've always made you too happy.  
Always and forever.

works by  
Gayle Smith





# Sleep

*Gayle Smith*

Oh sweet dream-filled sleep,  
to me an elusive stranger.  
Due to the lack of you I giggle, then weep,  
my mental health in danger.

Oh revitalizing, rejuvenating respite,  
as from a refreshing cup, from you I'd drink.  
For your healing tonic I am truly desperate,  
as I long for the land of Nod and Wink.

Oh precious, glorious slumber,  
you for granted I will never take,  
and perhaps soon your hours will be great in number,  
if I can only survive until spring break.

# Wildflowers

*Gayle Smith*

You sway and bob beside the well paved road,  
not intending to call attention to yourself

but

I catch your fragrance in the warm wind,  
and it turns my straight forward, determined head

and then

I see powdered butterflies of various hue  
dip, flutter and vie zealously, jealously for your attention

so I

Kneel next to you and scatter the lovely harem,  
and consume you with all of my senses.

But no

I know

you belong to the butterflies.

# Hugs

*Gayle Smith*

Almost everyone enjoys giving or receiving a hug — if it is the right type, that is. It is my experience that there are three distinct types of hugs. I am sure that the reader has either given, or has been the recipient of what I call the “obligatory” or “class reunion” type of hug. This hug is an insincere, yet mutual hug, given to or received from persons whom we have never met, and probably never will hug again. It can often be seen given at the receiving line of a wedding, or at class reunions, as its name suggests. It is executed quickly and stiffly, with each hugger grasping the other’s shoulders, their faces turned in opposite directions. There is often concern about smeared lipstick, crushed corsages and mussed hair before giving or receiving this hug.

I will call the second type of hug the “one sided hug.” This one is more sincere than the obligatory, at least on the part of the hugger. The hugee, however, is an unwilling participant. The recipient of this embrace stands with his arms pinned to his sides, while being smothered by the well-meaning hugger. Its duration is always too lengthy as far as the hugee is concerned. Small, cute children often suffer from this type at the hands (or should I say arms?) of well-meaning adults. Individuals who have had “one too many” at a party and infrequent bathers are notorious for giving “one-sideds.”

I have saved the best type of hug for last. I call it the “fusion” hug. In this hug, both parties are willing participants. I may be used to express sympathy, joy, excitement, comfort or passion, but it is always spontaneous, and always sincere. During this embrace, the huggers’ bodies melt together, exchanging body heat willingly and unashamedly. Many times the participants bury their faces into one another’s neck or chest. This type of hug is often accompanied by an excited jumping, gentle caressing or soothing rocking motion. The duration of this embrace varies widely, but the lucky participants usually wish it could last forever.